

The Oskar Reinhart Foundation restitutes a pastel artwork by Adolph Menzel to the Mosse heirs

The Oskar Reinhart Foundation in Winterthur has restituted a pastel drawing by Adolph Menzel of its collection to the heirs of the Berlin publisher Rudolf Mosse (1843-1920). Erna Felicia and Hans Lachmann-Mosse, Mosse's daughter and son-in-law, have been unlawfully deprived of the paper shortly after the Nazi takeover in Germany in 1933.

The restituted piece is the paper "Dame mit roter Bluse" ['Lady with red blouse'] (Kostümstudie, Menzels Schwester Emilie) [costume study, Menzel's sister Emilie], pastel on formerly blue, today browned paper 21/22 x 28.5/29 cm; Inv. No. 545. Due to the fact that the pieces in possession of the Oskar Reinhart Foundation are not for sale the foundation has not appraised the drawing.

In 1934, Oskar Reinhart purchased the paper from the art dealer Fritz Nathan in Munich, with whom he had been in touch regularly since 1928 and who he helped to escape to Switzerland in 1936. He paid 3. 632 Swiss Francs, which was a customary price for high-quality drawings by Menzel at the time.



In 1940, Oskar Reinhart brought the piece to the foundation, which he established to make his art collection available to the public. Menzel's pastel study was shown in the exhibition, which brought objects from the Oskar Reinhart Foundation to Berlin, New York, Los Angeles and Geneva from 1933-1995. The paper was exhibited under no. 67 and was described and depicted in the accompanying publications. Moreover, the pastel was depicted in Rolf Hochhuth, Menzel. Maler des Lichts [painter of the light], Frankfurt a. M./ Leipzig, p. 80.

Launched in 2012, the Mosse Art Project shed light on the circumstances that upon the bankruptcy of the Mosse publishing house led to the seizure of the collection and public auction of the objects in 1934 in Berlin, after the Mosse descendants had already left Germany.

Due to these new insights, the foundation board of the Oskar Reinhart Foundation contacted the heirs of the deprived owners at the time and offered them to resitute the paper. It is proven that Oskar Reinhart strictly avoided offers with unclear provenance in the 1930ies. The foundation board is convinced that it acts in the interest of the founder by giving back a work, which from today's perspective would not have been purchased by Reinhart if he had known about the exact circumstances of the sale.

Accordingly, the restitution of the Menzel pastel to the Mosse heirs (namely the Mosse Foundation, University of Wisconsin, Joy Mosse) was a result of complete discretion and took place without compensation.

The Oskar Reinhart Foundation collection includes about 640 paintings and sculptures as well as approximately 6'000 works on paper. Due to the history of the collector Oskar Reinhart and research done so far the Oskar Reinhart Foundation Winterthur shall assume that the restituted paper by Adolph Menzel represents an individual case.